

# Help me **be healthy**



## 6 to 12 months

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I weigh \_\_\_\_\_ pounds. I am \_\_\_\_\_ inches long.

A special note for me: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# I am your baby. I grow best with love and the right food!

## I need breast milk or formula.

Feed me breast milk or baby formula with iron until I turn one. You can still breastfeed me after one year if we want.

I know when I get hungry or full. I let you know by the way I act. Please feed me when I act hungry. Let me eat until I act full.

I might drink breast milk or formula 4 or more times a day. My tummy can hold about 6 to 8 ounces at a time.

- ♥ Hold me when you feed me. I feel safe in your arms.
- ♥ Sometimes I stop eating to talk with you or look around. I am not full yet. Please talk to me. I love our time together.



## With your help I will learn to eat other foods.

After 6 months, I can start to eat other foods. Please go slowly. If our family has allergies or I was born early, talk to the doctor and WIC before you start other foods.

**Be sure that I am ready.** To eat other foods, I must be able to:

- ♥ Sit and hold my head steady.
- ♥ Show I want food by opening my mouth.
- ♥ Show I don't want food by closing my mouth or turning my head.



**Choose healthy foods.** I need them to grow right. Let me learn to eat foods like:

Baby cereal- rice, oatmeal, barley

Vegetables- squash, peas, carrots, green beans

Fruit- applesauce, peaches, bananas, pears

Meats- beef, chicken, turkey

Keep my foods plain. Do not add sugar, salt, spices, butter, fat, or gravy. If you buy baby food in a jar, choose plain vegetables, fruit, and meats. Do not buy dinners or desserts.

**Give me only one new food at a time.** My body must get used to it. Let me eat the food once a day. Wait one week to try another new food.

If I vomit, wheeze, get a rash or diarrhea, **stop** feeding the food. Tell the doctor. These are signs I might not be ready.

## I must move through 4 stages of food:

1. Smooth (strained or puree)
2. Mashed (smooth with a few tiny lumps)
3. Chopped (more lumps)
4. Tiny pieces of food

Each stage gets a little harder. Be sure I can chew and swallow foods from one stage before you move me to the next one.

I don't need teeth to chew. I use my jaws to mash food and my tongue and fingers to move it in my mouth.





**I must learn to eat my way.** When I eat a new food, I might spit it out or make a face. All babies do. I will open my mouth if I want more. If I keep my mouth closed or turn my head, don't force me to eat. But, try the food again at another meal.

I will like most foods. But, I might need to taste them 10 times before I know for sure. Please let me try many foods, even those you don't like!

Be patient. I will get food on my hands, face, and hair. Do not fuss or laugh. Be proud of me as I learn to eat.

**Keep me safe.** Wash your hands and mine before you fix my food or feed me. Do not heat my food in a microwave oven. It could burn my mouth.

Put my food in a dish and feed it to me with a baby spoon. Throw out breast milk or formula left in a bottle or cup or food left in a dish after I eat.

Do **not** give me foods I can choke on or get sick from, like:

hot dogs or meat sticks	peanut butter
raw vegetables	bacon
whole grapes	fish with bones
potato or corn chips	bologna or deli meats
popcorn	whole eggs or egg whites
hard candy	unpasteurized fruit juice
raisins	rare or raw meats
nuts	honey or food made with it

## Teach me to drink from a cup.

Use a small cup that does not break. Pour a little water into it. Lift the cup so it touches my lips and I get a taste.

♥ I need practice! Let me drink from a cup at meals. Hold the cup and let me take sips. I can drink breast milk, formula, and WIC juice in a cup, too.



As I learn to drink more formula from a cup, I drink less from a bottle. By one year, I should be "off" the bottle.

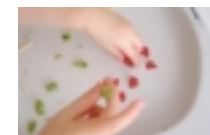
Do not give me punch, tea, or soda. The sugar hurts my teeth and does not help me grow strong.

## Let me eat food with my fingers.

By 8 or 9 months, I might want to eat food with my fingers. You still need to use a spoon to feed me. But, let me try to feed myself, too.

Fix foods so I can't choke on them. Safe "finger" foods are:

- Tiny pieces of cooked vegetables or soft fruit
- Tiny pieces of cooked meat, chicken, or turkey
- Mashed cooked beans, egg yolk, or tofu
- Chopped noodles or rice
- Bite-size pieces of toast, plain crackers, or soft tortilla



Make pieces of food no bigger than this:



## How much should I eat?

I need to eat about 5 or 6 times a day. One meal might be breast milk or formula. Another meal might be breast milk or formula plus cereal. As I start eating more foods, you can give me 2 or 3 at a meal. Here are some ideas:

Breast milk or formula + baby oatmeal cereal + peaches

Fork-mashed peas + rice + chopped chicken

Breast milk or formula in a cup + tiny pieces of banana + chopped noodles

Start with one or 2 tablespoons of each food. Give me more if I want it.



♥ Let me eat until I act full. I might close my lips, turn or shake my head, or raise my arm. Ask me if I am full. Then, let me stop eating if I want to.

♥ Eat with me at our family meals. I eat better when you are with me. Let's turn the TV off so we can talk.

**How do you know I eat enough?** The doctor says I am gaining weight and growing well.

Please talk to WIC if you have questions about feeding me.

## Play with me!

Put me on a blanket on the floor. Put a toy just out of my reach so I can move to get it. Roll a ball to me. Hold both my hands and let me walk with you.



## Look what I can do!

I love to learn from you. Read to me. Sing a song. Let's play games like peek-a-boo and so-big. Take me for a walk and show me new things. I'm active—keep an eye on me!

### 6 to 9 Months-

I can sit up and roll over. I will start to creep and crawl. I like to shake things and drop them to see what happens.



### 9 to 12 Months-

I like to use my hands. I can hold my cup. I like to point and wave bye-bye. I say *da-da* and *ma-ma*. I can pull myself up to stand.



## Health and Safety Tips



- ♥ I need check ups and shots to stay healthy. I should visit the doctor at 6 months, 9 months, and one year of age.
- ♥ I must sit when I eat. Never leave me alone when I eat or when changing or bathing me.
- ♥ Clean my gums and teeth with a clean, wet, soft cloth after I eat. Ask the doctor if I need fluoride.
- ♥ Never put me to bed with a bottle. I could choke, get an earache, or ruin my teeth.
- ♥ If other people feed me, be sure to ask what and how much I eat.
- ♥ Let me explore and learn. See each room like I will from the floor, and make it safe for me.
- ♥ Keep me away from cigarette and other tobacco smoke. Smoke hurts my lungs and can make me sick.
- ♥ It's the law! Buckle me into an infant car seat before we ride in a car. Install my seat in the car's back seat, facing backwards.

Office of the Maryland WIC Program

1-800-242-4WIC

<http://mdwic.org>

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